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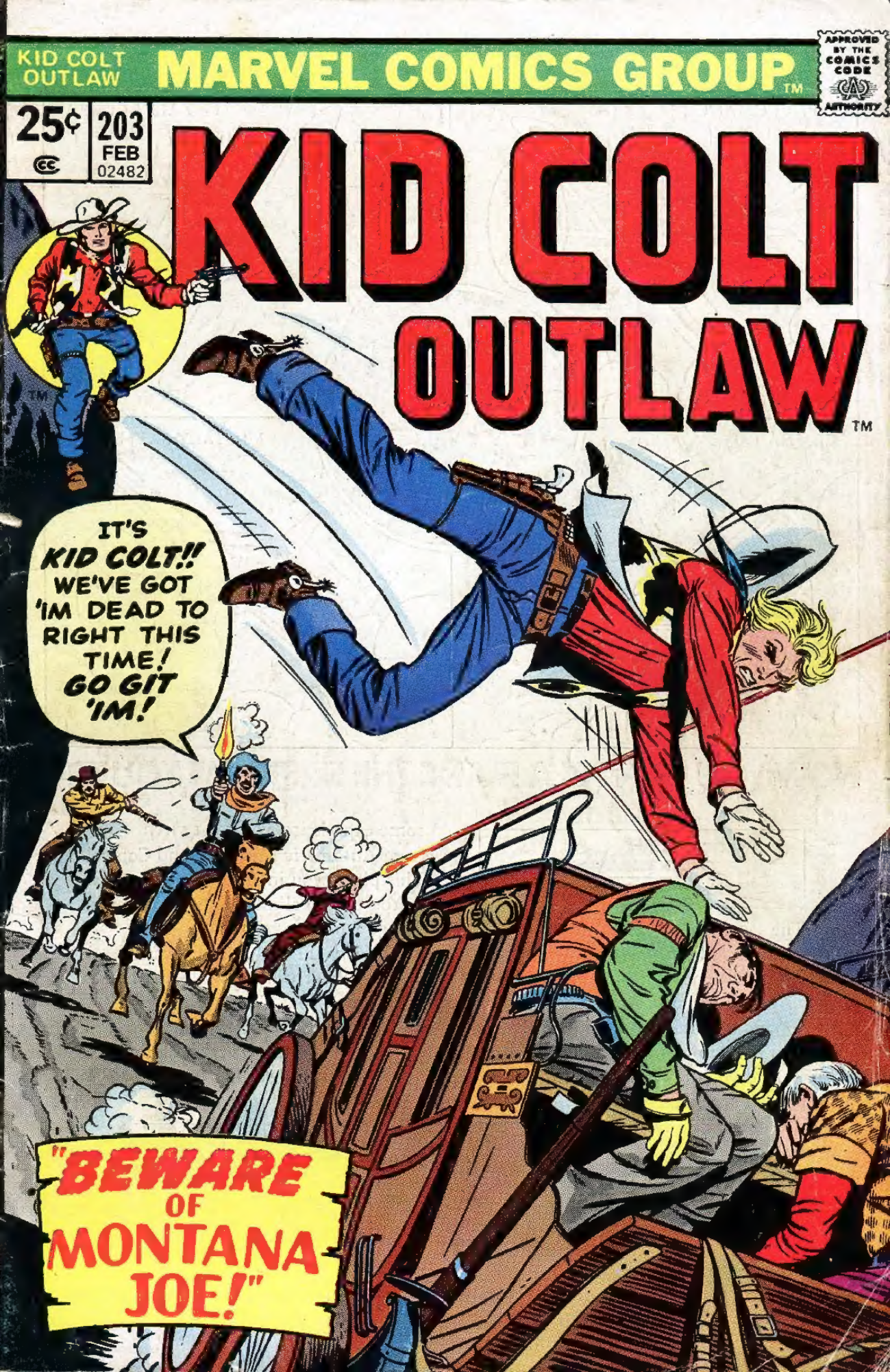
KID COLT OUTLAW™



"BEWARE OF MONTANA JOE!"

Stan Lee PRESENTS

KID COLT™ OUTLAW

"BEWARE OF MONTANA JOE!"

KID COLT HAD FOUGHT MANY MANY MEN IN HIS TIME, BUT NONE MORE DANGEROUS, NONE MORE SINISTER, NONE MORE DIABOLICALLY CLEVER THAN THE STAGECOACH ROBBER KNOWN SIMPLY AS **MONTANA JOE!** LET US GO BACK TO THE TIME OF THEIR FIRST MEETING ON THE LONELY, RUGGED TRAIL TO TOMBSTONE...

UP AHEAD--OWLHOOTS HOLDIN' UP THAT STAGE! LET'S GO, STEEL BOY! RECKON KID COLT WILL DEAL HIMSELF IN!
CLIMB OUTTA THAT STAGE, ALL OF YUH!
ONE FALSE MOVE AND YORE GONERS!
TOSS DOWN THAT CASH BOX! PRONTO!

CHAPTER 1

"THE REVENGE OF MONTANA JOE!"

Stan Lee

KELLER AYERS

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN KID COLT # 96

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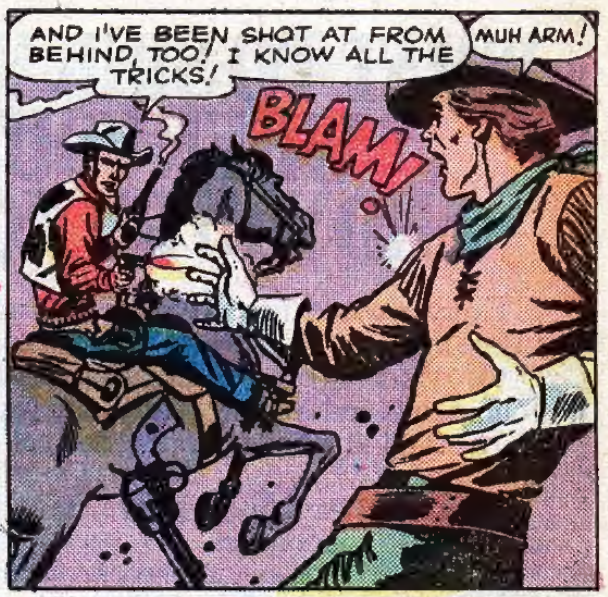
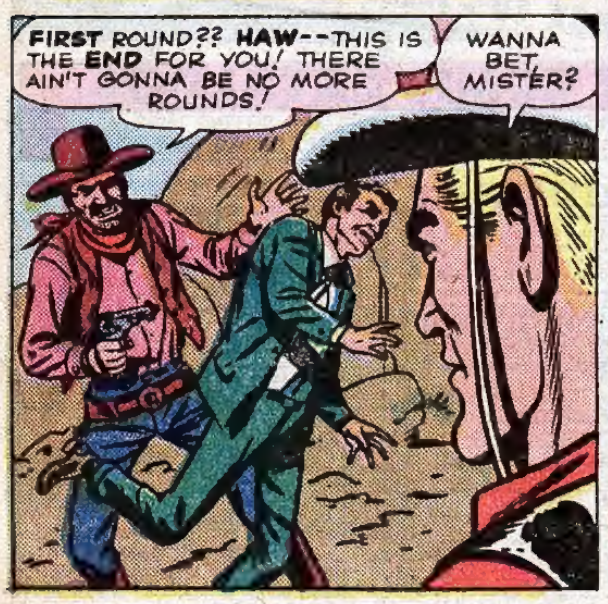
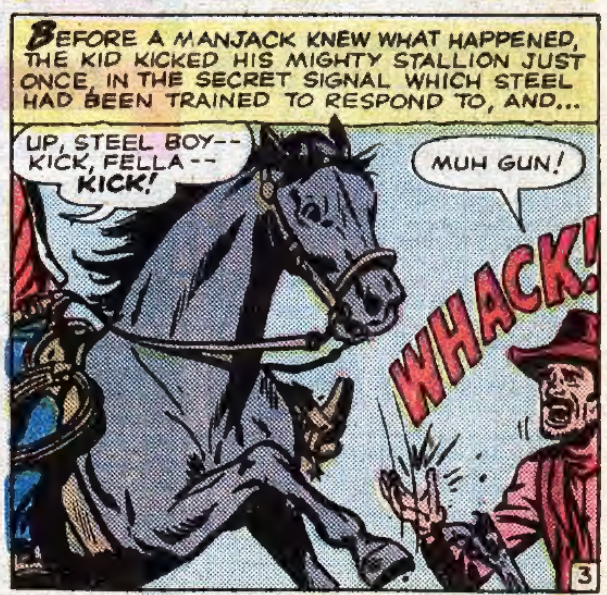
HERE'S THE CASH BOX, HOMBRES!
THUD!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, MONTANA?
BLAST IT OPEN, YUH FOOL! WHAT DO YUH THINK WE CAME FOR??
BUT WHAT ABOUT THEM?
THE WAY IT LOOKS TO ME, DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES!
NO- NO! YUH WOULDN'T !!
CLICK!
HAW! CAN'T YUH TAKE A LITTLE JOKE?? I WOULDN'T WASTE A BULLET ON YOU WEAK-KNEED CRITTERS! JUST TURN TAIL AND START WALKIN' --AND DON'T LOOK BACK!
START WALKING?? WHERE TO? WE'RE MILES FROM ANYWHERE --WE'LL STARVE!
MEBBE YUH'D RATHER I JUST SHOT YUH THEN??
NO--WE'LL-- WE'LL WALK! WE'LL WALK!
STAY WHERE YUH ARE! DON'T NOBODY MOVE!
HUH?
ROBBIN' A STAGE IS BAD ENUFF, BUT ANY JASPER WHO'D SET INNOCENT PEOPLE ON FOOT, MILES FROM ANY-WHERE, IS NO BETTER'N A MURDERER!
HE'S ONLY ONE HOMBRE --AGAINST THREE OF US! GUN 'IM DOWN!
2






BEFORE A MANJACK KNEW WHAT HAPPENED, THE KID KICKED HIS MIGHTY STALLION JUST ONCE, IN THE SECRET SIGNAL WHICH STEEL HAD BEEN TRAINED TO RESPOND TO, AND...
UP, STEEL BOY-- KICK, FELLA -- KICK!
MUH GUN!
WHACK!
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CONTINUED AFTER NEXT-PAGE

IT'S HERE!

THE SENSATIONAL SEQUEL YOU DEMANDED!

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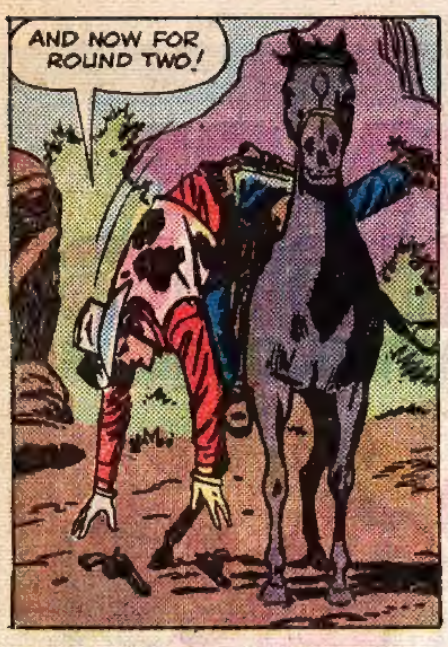
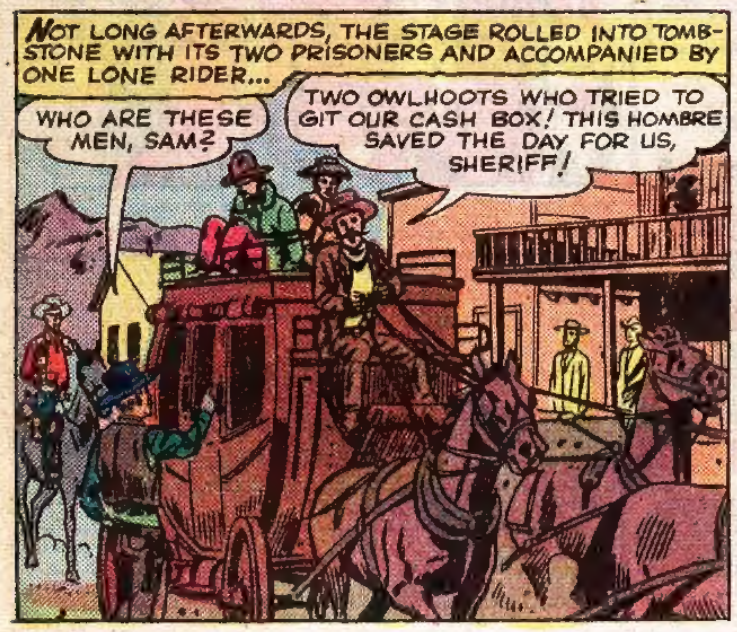


BUT ROUND TWO WAS NOT TO TAKE PLACE JUST THEN, FOR BY THE TIME THE KID TURNED TO FACE HIS FOES AGAIN, HE FOUND THE TWO OUTLAWS WITH THEIR HANDS RAISED IN ABJECT SURRENDER, WHILE THE LEADER OF THE BAND WAS DISAPPEARING 'ROUND THE BEND AT TOP SPEED!

NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, THE STAGE ROLLED INTO TOMBSTONE WITH ITS TWO PRISONERS AND ACCOMPANIED BY ONE LONE RIDER...

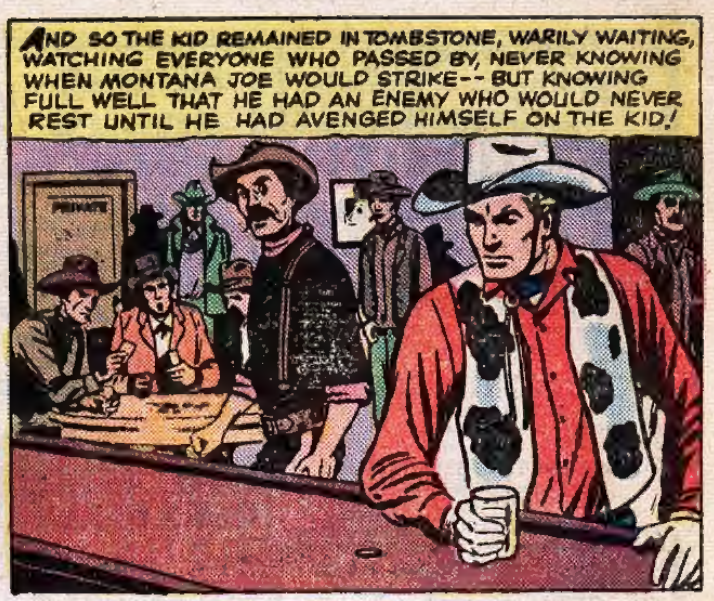


AS THE SHERIFF'S EYES TURNED TOWARD THE KID, HIS HAND INSTINCTIVELY STARTED FOR HIS GUN...

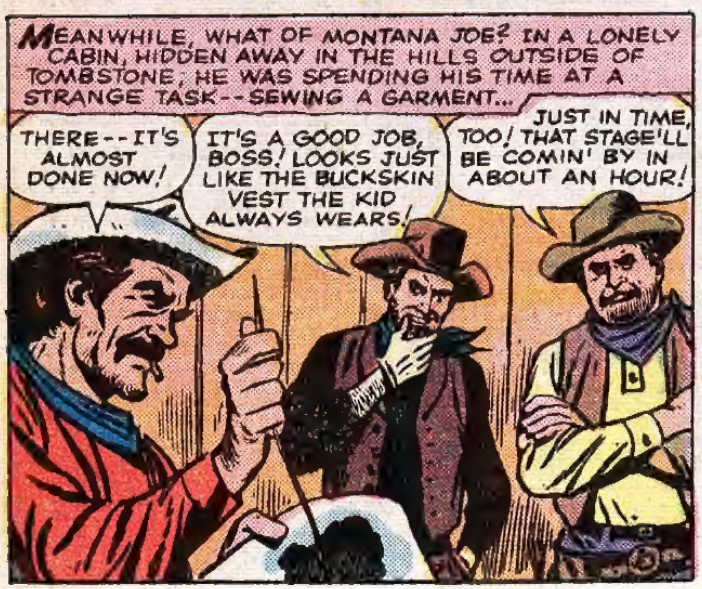
BUT THE LAWMAN'S QUIVERING FINGERS NEVER MADE IT!!

ALL RIGHT, KID, WE GOT NO FIGHT! I'M GRATEFUL YUH SAVED THE STAGE! BUT I'D WEAR THOSE GUNS MIGHTY LOW FROM NOW ON IF'N I WAS YOU! THESE TWO HOMBRES ARE PART OF MONTANA JOE'S BAND, AND MONTANA JOE DON'T NEVER FORGET A MAN WHO CROSSES HIM!
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE AS FAST ON THE DRAW AS I AM! I SHOULDA GUESSED IT WAS HIM!

YORE NOT WANTED IN THIS TOWN, KID, BUT YUH BETTER NOT LEAVE FOR A WHILE! MONTANA JOE IS SURE TO BE WAITIN' FOR YUH WITH THE REST OF HIS BOYS, ON THE TRAIL LEADIN' OUTTA TOWN! YUH WOULDN'T HAVE A CHANCE!
LOOKS LIKE I GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO STAY AROUND FOR A SPELL THEN!


AND SO THE KID REMAINED IN TOMBSTONE, WARILY WAITING, WATCHING EVERYONE WHO PASSED BY, NEVER KNOWING WHEN MONTANA JOE WOULD STRIKE--BUT KNOWING FULL WELL THAT HE HAD AN ENEMY WHO WOULD NEVER REST UNTIL HE HAD AVENGED HIMSELF ON THE KID!
PRIVATE

I DON'T LIKE KID COLT HANGIN' 'ROUND TOWN THIS WAY!
ME NEITHER! THERE'LL BE TROUBLE SOONER OR LATER!
HOW DO WE KNOW HE AIN'T IN CAHOOTS WITH MONTANA JOE?
MEBBE THEY PLANNED IT THIS WAY TO THROW US OFF GUARD!
YESH, WHAT IF THEY TRY TO TREE THE TOWN TOGETHER?!


MEANWHILE, WHAT OF MONTANA JOE? IN A LONELY CABIN, HIDDEN AWAY IN THE HILLS OUTSIDE OF TOMBSTONE, HE WAS SPENDING HIS TIME AT A STRANGE TASK--SEWING A GARMENT...
THERE--IT'S ALMOST DONE NOW!
IT'S A GOOD JOB, BOSS! LOOKS JUST LIKE THE BUCKSKIN VEST THE KID ALWAYS WEARS!
JUST IN TIME, TOO! THAT STAGE'LL BE COMIN' BY IN ABOUT AN HOUR!

IN THESE BLUE PANTS AND RED SHIRT, WITH A BUCKSKIN VEST, AND MY WHITE HAT PULLED LOW OVER MY FACE, I'LL LOOK AS MUCH LIKE KID COLT AS HE LOOKS LIKE HIMSELF!
CHECK YORE GUNS, BOYS! THIS IS IT!
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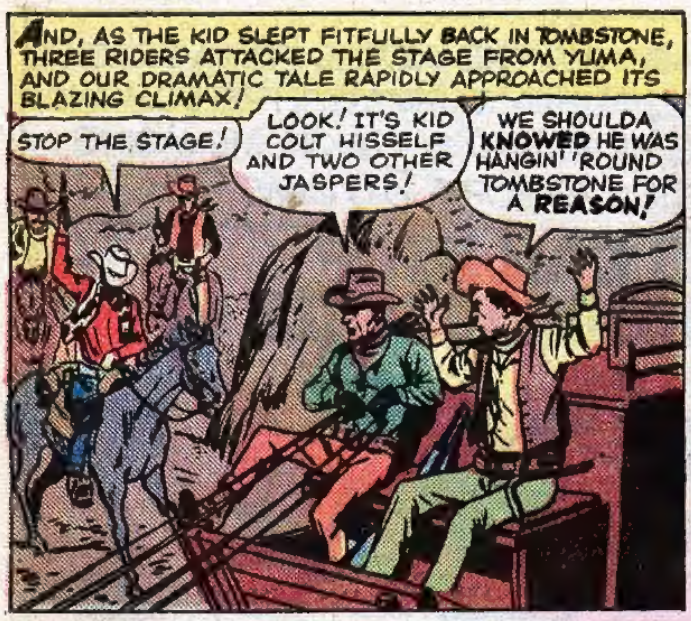
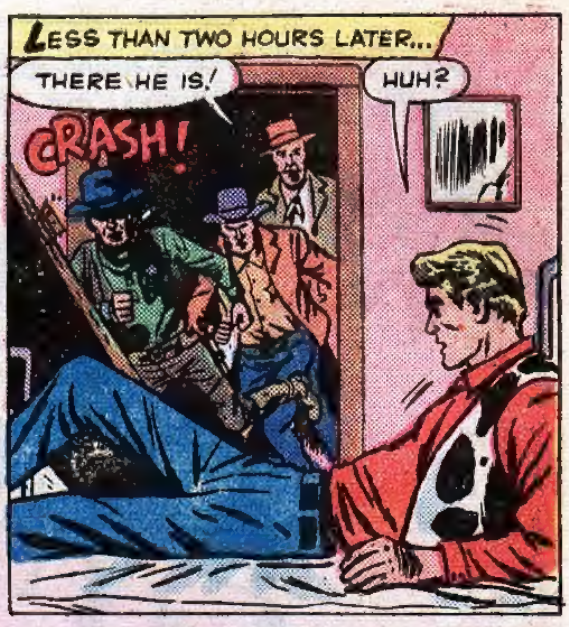
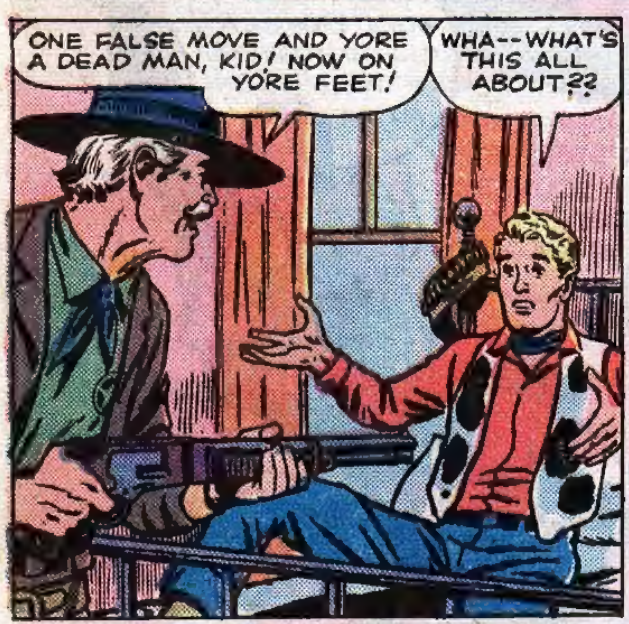

AND, AS THE KID SLEPT FITFULLY BACK IN TOMBSTONE, THREE RIDERS ATTACKED THE STAGE FROM YUMA, AND OUR DRAMATIC TALE RAPIDLY APPROACHED ITS BLAZING CLIMAX!
STOP THE STAGE!
LOOK! IT'S KID COLT HISSELF AND TWO OTHER JASPERS!
WE SHOULDA KNOWED HE WAS HANGIN' 'ROUND TOMBSTONE FOR A REASON!


LESS THAN TWO HOURS LATER...
THERE HE IS!
HUH?
CRASH!


ONE FALSE MOVE AND YORE A DEAD MAN, KID! NOW ON YORE FEET!
WHA--WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT??

DON'T PLAY INNOCENT WITH ME, HOMBRE! BIGGEST MISTAKE YUH EVER MADE WAS COMING BACK TO TOMBSTONE TONIGHT! YUH SHOULDA HEADED FOR THE BORDER AFTER YUH ROBBED THE STAGE!
STAGE?? WHAT STAGE?

COLT, YUH'LL STAY IN THAT CELL UNTIL YUH TELL US WHERE YUH HID THE CASH BOX FROM THE STAGE!
I TELL YUH YORE MAKIN' A MISTAKE! I DIDN'T LEAVE MY ROOM TONIGHT! I NEVER ROBBED ANY STAGE!

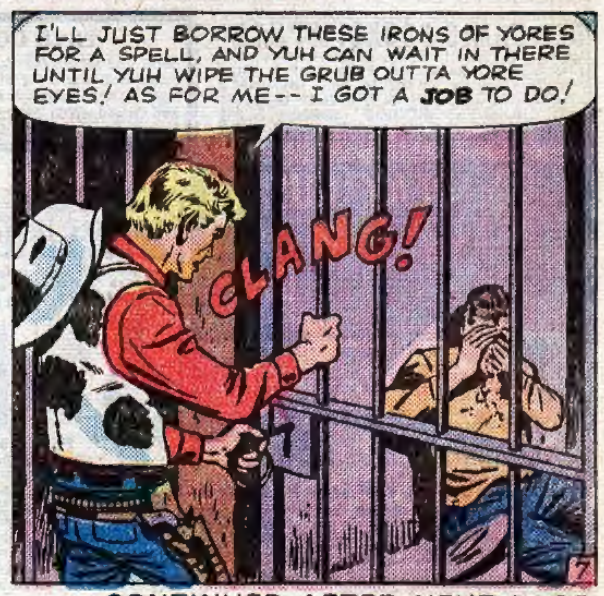
LET ME WORK ON 'IM, SHERIFF! I'LL GIT 'IM TO TALK!
NO, HANK! WE'LL DO IT, LAWFUL! HE CAN'T ESCAPE... AND SOONER OR LATER HE'LL TALK!

WHILE BACK IN THE HIDDEN CABIN IN THE HILLS...
IT WORKED! WE GOT THE LOOT, AND THE KID WILL GET THE BLAME!
WHAT ABOUT THE KID'S OUTFIT--AREN'T YUH GONNA BURN IT?

NO... MEBBE I CAN USE IT AGAIN SOMETIME, IF HE EVER GITS OUT OF JAIL! HAW HAW!
I'M ONLY SORRY I AIN'T HAD A CHANCE TO DRAW AGAINST HIM--I RECKON HE'S STILL GETTIN' OFF TOO EASY!

BUT THE KID THOUGHT DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THINGS! IN HIS CELL, HE WAS BURNING WITH A WHITE HOT ANGER--A FLAMING FURY! HE KNEW HE HAD TO AVENGE HIMSELF AGAINST MONTANA JOE... EVEN IF IT COST HIM HIS VERY LIFE!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! I'VE GOT TO FIND MONTANA JOE! I'VE GOT TO!

HERE'S YOUR GRUB, KID! AND YORE LUCKY TO GIT IT! IF'N I WAS THE SHERIFF, I'D STARVE YUH OUT UNTIL YUH TOLD WHERE YUH HID THE MONEY!
YUH WOULD, EH?


I'LL JUST BORROW THESE IRONS OF YORES FOR A SPELL, AND YUH CAN WAIT IN THERE UNTIL YUH WIPE THE GRUB OUTTA YORE EYES! AS FOR ME--I GOT A JOB TO DO!
CLANG!

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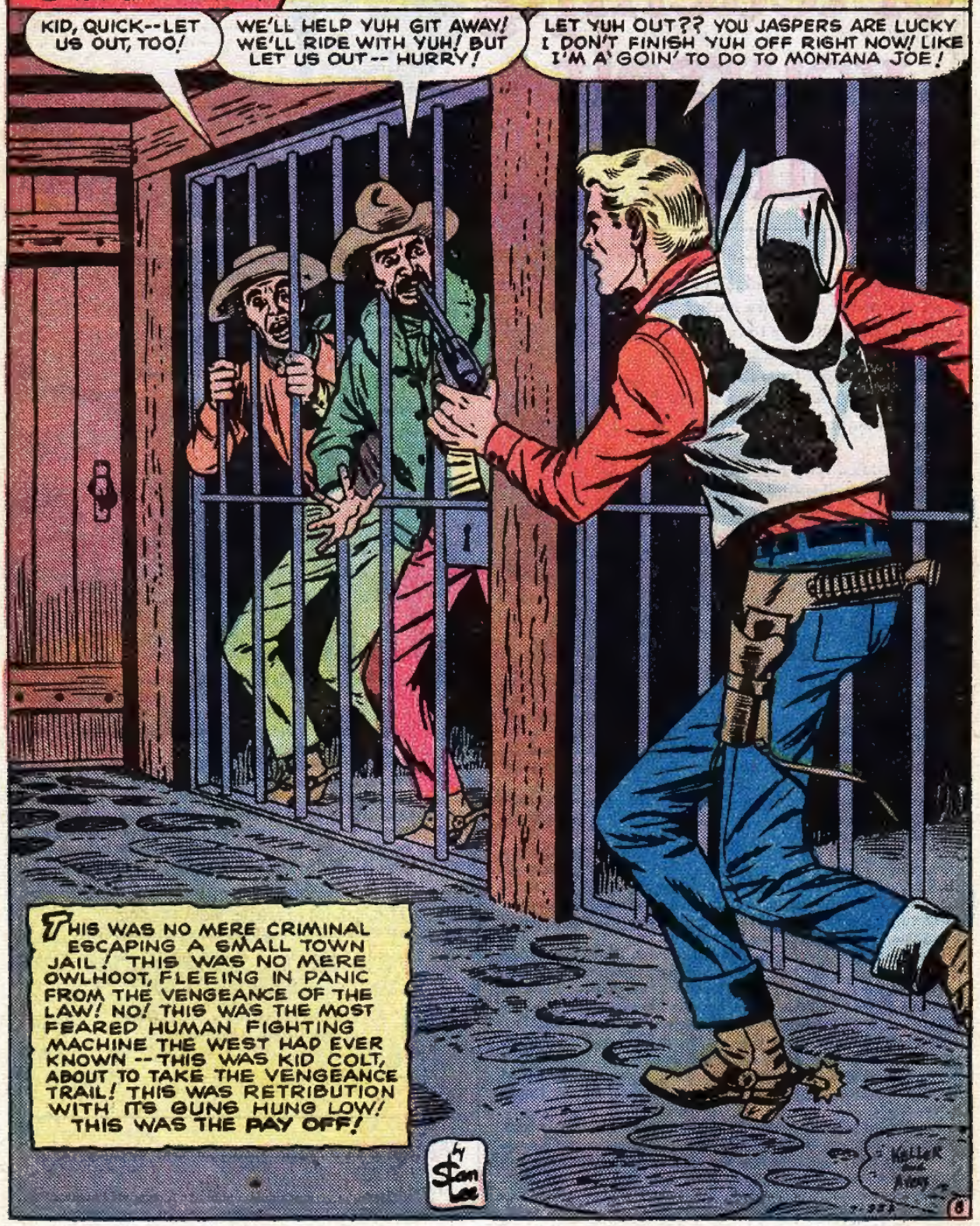
KID COLT OUTLAW

CHAPTER 2 "THE KID STRIKES BACK!"


KID, QUICK--LET US OUT, TOO!
WE'LL HELP YUH GIT AWAY! WE'LL RIDE WITH YUH! BUT LET US OUT -- HURRY!
LET YUH OUT?? YOU JASPERS ARE LUCKY I DON'T FINISH YUH OFF RIGHT NOW! LIKE I'M A'GOIN' TO DO TO MONTANA JOE!
THIS WAS NO MERE CRIMINAL ESCAPING A SMALL TOWN JAIL! THIS WAS NO MERE OWLHOOT, FLEEING IN PANIC FROM THE VENGEANCE OF THE LAW! NO! THIS WAS THE MOST FEARED HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE THE WEST HAD EVER KNOWN -- THIS WAS KID COLT, ABOUT TO TAKE THE VENGEANCE TRAIL! THIS WAS RETRIBUTION WITH ITS GUNS HUNG LOW! THIS WAS THE PAY OFF!
by Stan Lee
Keller
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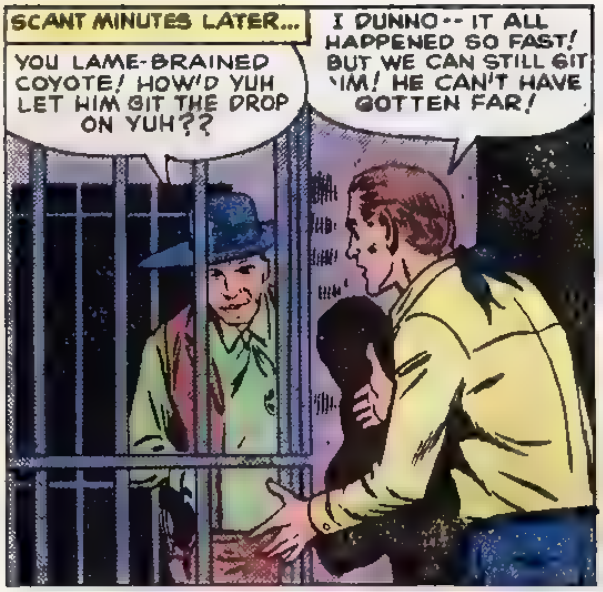
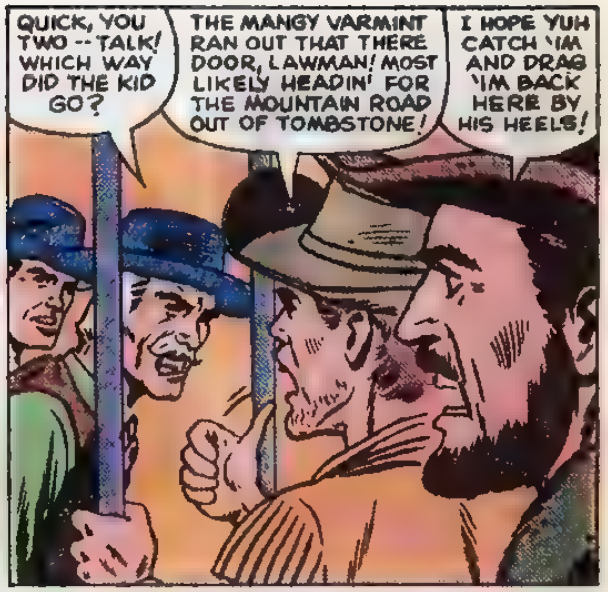
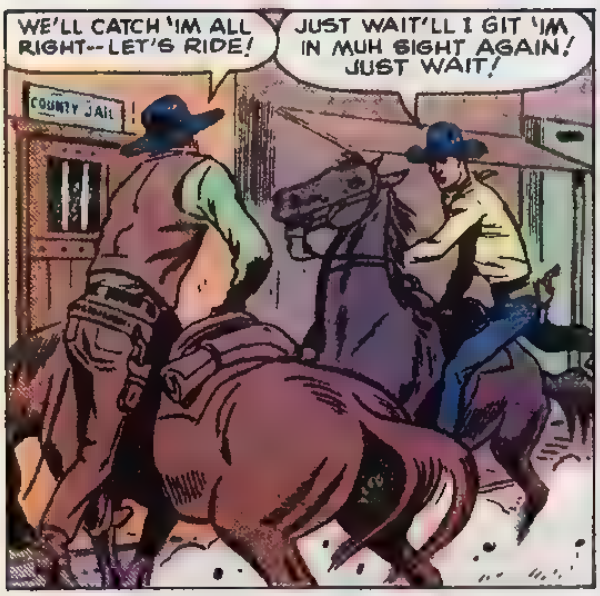
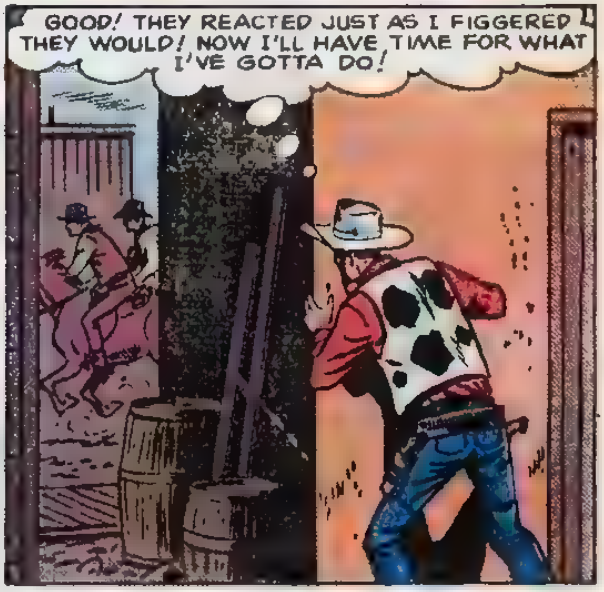
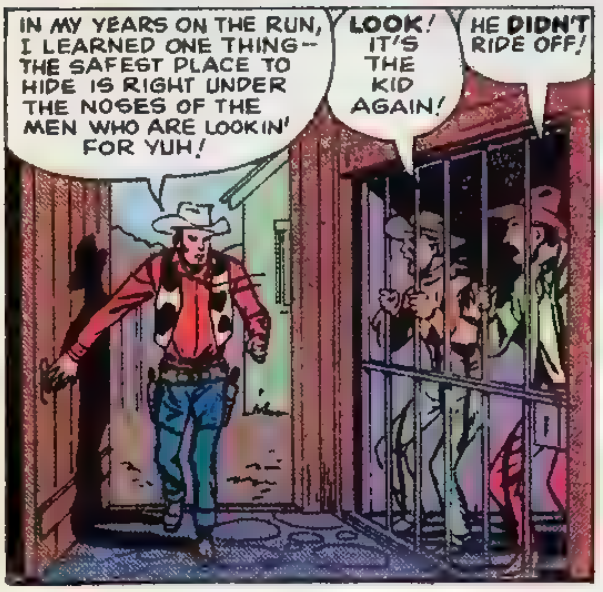
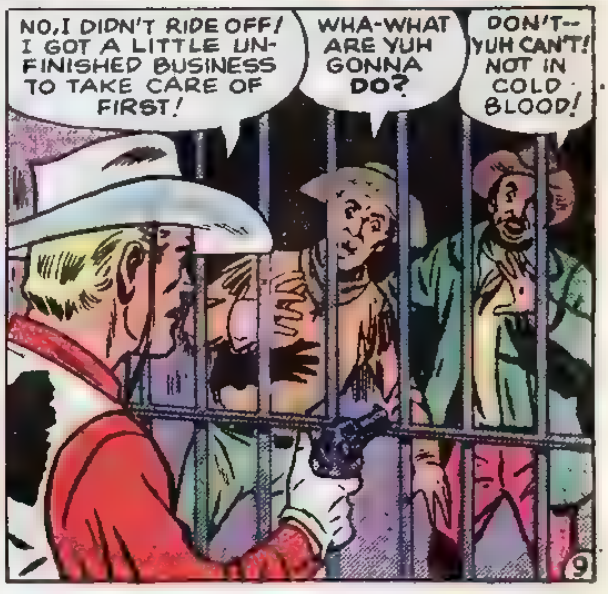

SCANT MINUTES LATER...
YOU LAME-BRAINED COYOTE! HOW'D YUH LET HIM GIT THE DROP ON YUH??
I DUNNO -- IT ALL HAPPENED SO FAST! BUT WE CAN STILL GIT 'IM! HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR!


QUICK, YOU TWO -- TALK! WHICH WAY DID THE KID GO?
THE MANGY VARMINT RAN OUT THAT THERE DOOR, LAWMAN! MOST LIKELY HEADIN' FOR THE MOUNTAIN ROAD OUT OF TOMBSTONE!
I HOPE YUH CATCH 'IM AND DRAG 'IM BACK HERE BY HIS HEELS!


WE'LL CATCH 'IM ALL RIGHT--LET'S RIDE!
JUST WAIT'LL I GIT 'IM IN MUH SIGHT AGAIN! JUST WAIT!
COUNTY JAIL


GOOD! THEY REACTED JUST AS I FIGGERED THEY WOULD! NOW I'LL HAVE TIME FOR WHAT I'VE GOTTA DO!


IN MY YEARS ON THE RUN, I LEARNED ONE THING -- THE SAFEST PLACE TO HIDE IS RIGHT UNDER THE NOSES OF THE MEN WHO ARE LOOKIN' FOR YUH!
LOOK! IT'S THE KID AGAIN!
HE DIDN'T RIDE OFF!


NO, I DIDN'T RIDE OFF! I GOT A LITTLE UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF FIRST!
WHA-WHAT ARE YUH GONNA DO?
DON'T-- YUH CAN'T! NOT IN COLD BLOOD!

STOP SLOBBERIN'! I'VE GOT OTHER PLANS FOR YUH!
BAROOOM!
MOUNT UP, PRONTO! WE'RE GOIN' FOR A LITTLE RIDE!
WHERE--? WHY??
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS, YUH FOOL! DO WHAT HE SAYS!
LOOK-- THE KID'S ESCAPIN' --WITH THEM OTHER TWO JASPERS!
SOMEBODY STOP 'EM!
WHO? I DON'T WANNA BE A DEAD HERO-- HOW ABOUT YOU??
N-NOT ME! IT'S THE SHERIFF'S JOB!
NOW LISTEN GOOD, YOU HOMBRES, BECAUSE I AIN'T GONNA SAY IT A SECOND TIME! -- EITHER YUH LEAD ME TO MONTANA JOE'S HIDEOUT, OR I DROP YUH IN YORE TRACKS NOW! SAVVY?
WE SAVVY!
WE'RE LUCKY! ONCE THE KID GETS TO MONTANA JOE'S, MONTANA HIMSELF WILL FINISH 'IM OFF!
THAT'S RIGHT! THE KID WON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
THIS IS A WILD GOOSE CHASE! I DON'T SEE A TRACE OF ANY TRACKS! THE KID COULDN'T HAVE COME THIS WAY!
WELL, HE COULDN'T HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR! HE'S GOT TO BE HERE SOMEWHERE!
SHERIFF! LOOK! THAT CLOUD OF DUST YONDER! IT MUST BE HIM!

LOOK, ON THAT RIDGE YONDER! TWO RIDERS!
MOST LIKELY THE SHERIFF AND HIS DEPUTY!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM! I'LL HAVE DONE MY JOB LONG BEFORE THEY CAN REACH US!

AND SO, THE WEB OF FATE DRAWS CLOSER AND CLOSER, AS WE FIND MONTANA JOE AND HIS MEN IN HIS HIDDEN CABIN...
BOSS, I HEARD HOSSES!
UP HERE? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
GO OUT AND CHECK ANYWAY!

THERE AIN'T NO ONE HERE!

UGH!

ONE SOUND OUTTA YOU, AND IT'LL BE YORE LAST!
THE KID!

RED, GO OUT AND SEE WHAT'S KEEPIN' BEN!
I DON'T LIKE IT! IT'S TOO QUIET OUT THERE!

WHA-WHAT ARE YOU HOMBRES DOIN' HERE? HOW--?
MMFFF...
UGH!
THAT DOES IT! NOW THERE'S ONLY MONTANA JOE LEFT!
BUT INSIDE THE CABIN, MONTANA JOE HAD SEEN WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND...
IT'S THE KID! I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT, BUT I'LL FINISH HIM OFF FOR GOOD NOW!
I'LL SWING THE DOOR OPEN SUDDENLY AND RUN OUT SHOOTIN'! THE KID WON'T BE EXPECTIN' IT, AND HE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
BUT THE WILY KID COLT WAS ONE JUMP AHEAD OF MONTANA JOE! FOR BEFORE THE OUTLAW COULD OPEN THE DOOR FROM THE INSIDE...
I BEEN LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THIS FOR QUITE A SPELL, MONTANA!
OOOF!
WHUMP!
12

I'LL CRUSH YUH LIKE A BEETLE!
MEBBE YUH COULD, IF **TALKIN'** WAS THE SAME AS FIGHTIN'!
SWISH!
THIS IS FOR TRYIN' TO MAKE A PATSY OUTTA ME, MONTANA!
HA, YUH DIDN'T THINK I HAD ANOTHER GUN! **NOW** YORE FINISHED!
AND **THIS** IS FOR THINKIN' YORE IN THE SAME CLASS AS ME WITH A GUN!
NO-- **NOBODY** CAN DRAW LIKE THAT!
KA-POW
AND THIS IS BECAUSE I HAVEN'T ANY MORE TIME TO PLAY WITH YUH! THE SHERIFF'S ALMOST HERE!
POW
THE KID WAS RIGHT! THE SHERIFF WAS JUST MINUTES FROM THE CABIN, AND WHEN HE FINALLY REACHED IT, HE FOUND...
LOOK, SHERIFF-- ALL FOUR OF MONTANA JOE'S BOYS--TIED UP AND WAITIN' FOR US!
AND THERE'S MONTANA JOE HIMSELF--DRESSED LIKE KID COLT! I-- I **SEE** IT NOW! IT WASN'T THE KID WHO PULLED THAT STAGE COACH JOB-- IT WAS MONTANA! HE **WANTED** THE KID TO GET THE BLAME!
13
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE KID? AIN'T WE GONNA GO AFTER HIM?
ONLY REASON WE'D HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM WOULD BE TO **THANK** HIM FOR HANDIN' US MONTANA JOE AND HIS GANG ON A SILVER PLATTER! AND SOMEHOW I GOT A FEELIN' THAT KID COLT AIN'T ONE TO HANKER FOR THANKS!
LET'S RIDE, STEEL! OUR WORK IN TOMBSTONE IS FINISHED!
YES, THE KID'S WORK IN TOMBSTONE **WAS** FINISHED-- FOR THEN! BUT THERE WERE MANY MORE BATTLES TO BE FOUGHT... MANY MORE GUNMEN TO BE FACED-- FOR SUCH WAS THE DESTINY OF KID COLT, OUTLAW!
THE END

KID COLT OUTLAW

"TRAGEDY ON THE TRAIL!"

HERE COMES A LONE RIDER NOW, GAL! DO WHAT I TOLD YUH TO DO... AND REMEMBER: NO SLIP-UPS!
I-I'LL DO IT, GEORGE!
THE AIR HERE IS SO STILL AND HEAVY-HANGIN', IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE SOMETHIN'S WAITIN' TO HAPPEN! AW, I GUESS I BEEN ON THE RUN TOO LONG! I'M STARTIN' TO GET SUSPICIOUS FOR NO REASON AT ALL THESE DAYS!
FROM THE LEGENDS OF KID COLT!

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN KID COLT — 96

MISTER! HELP! PLEASE HELP!
WHOA, THERE, STEEL! A GAL'S IN TROUBLE!
MY HORSE! HE HURT HIS ANKLE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO! HE'S IN THERE... IN THAT CLUMP OF TREES!
NOW DON'T YOU WORRY, MA'AM! I'LL JUST TAKE A LOOK-SEE FOR YOU!
I DON'T SEE 'IM, MA'AM!
A LITTLE FURTHER IN, MISTER!
NOW!
UGH!
HAH!
BAH! IT WUZ ALMOST A WASTE OF TIME! HE'S HARDLY CARRYIN' NO MONEY A-TALL!
OH, GEORGE! I-I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T HURT HIM!
WHAT IF I DID?? HE'S JUST A LONE SADDLE-TRAMP! NOBODY'D MISS 'IM! C'MON, AT LEAST I'LL GIT HIS HOSS AND SADDLE!
ARE YOU JUST GOING TO LEAVE HIM THERE? MAYBE HE NEEDS A DOCTOR! GEORGE, WAIT!
12

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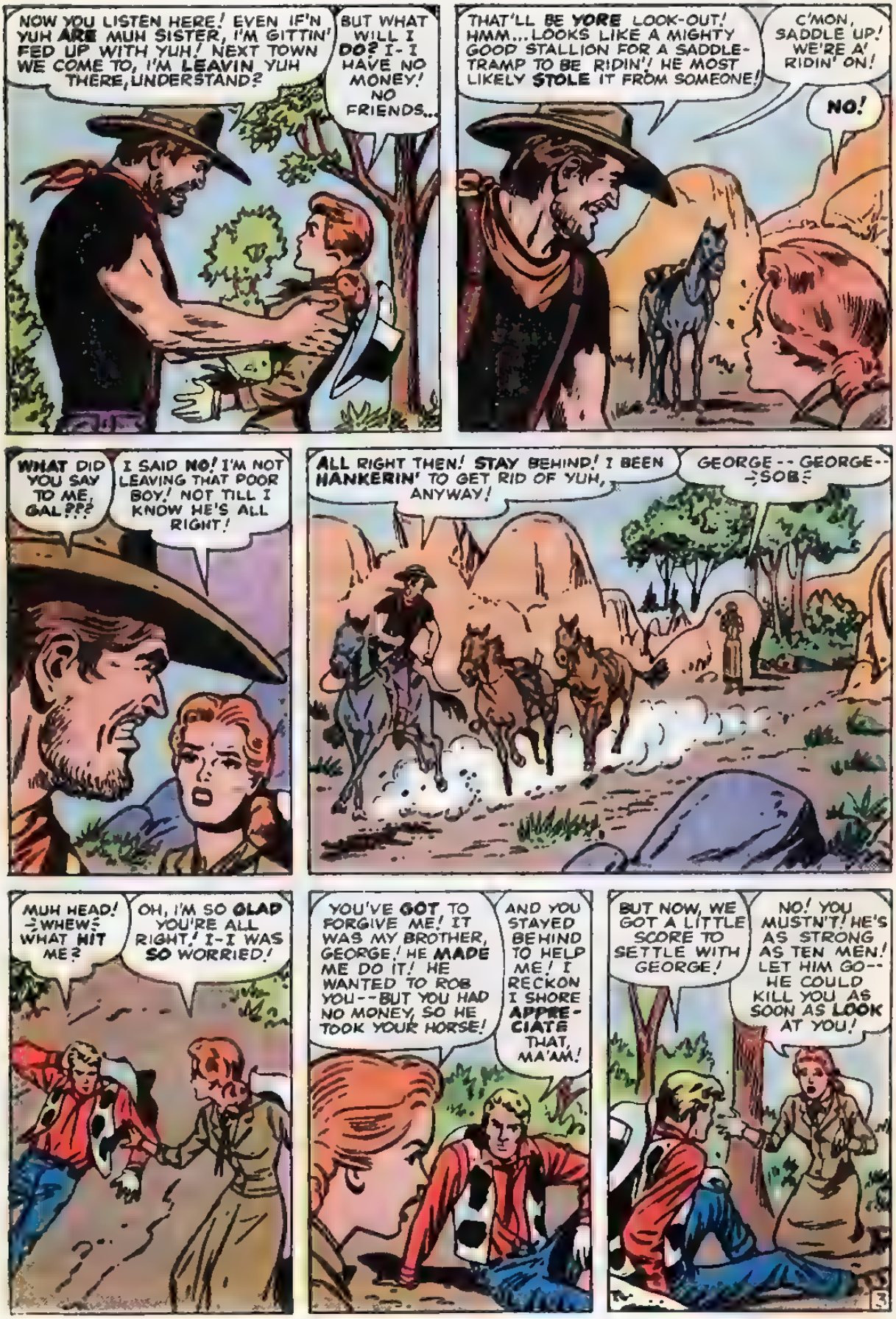

NOW YOU LISTEN HERE! EVEN IF'N YUH ARE MUH SISTER, I'M GITTIN' FED UP WITH YUH! NEXT TOWN WE COME TO, I'M LEAVIN YUH THERE, UNDERSTAND?
BUT WHAT WILL I DO? I- I HAVE NO MONEY! NO FRIENDS..
THAT'LL BE YORE LOOK-OUT! HMM... LOOKS LIKE A MIGHTY GOOD STALLION FOR A SADDLE-TRAMP TO BE RIDIN'! HE MOST LIKELY STOLE IT FROM SOMEONE!
C'MON, SADDLE UP! WE'RE A' RIDIN' ON!
NO!
WHAT DID YOU SAY TO ME, GAL?!?
I SAID NO! I'M NOT LEAVING THAT POOR BOY! NOT TILL I KNOW HE'S ALL RIGHT!
ALL RIGHT THEN! STAY BEHIND! I BEEN HANKERIN' TO GET RID OF YUH, ANYWAY!
GEORGE -- GEORGE-- =SOB=
MUH HEAD! =WHEW= WHAT HIT ME?
OH, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! I-I WAS SO WORRIED!
YOU'VE GOT TO FORGIVE ME! IT WAS MY BROTHER, GEORGE! HE MADE ME DO IT! HE WANTED TO ROB YOU -- BUT YOU HAD NO MONEY, SO HE TOOK YOUR HORSE!
AND YOU STAYED BEHIND TO HELP ME! I RECKON I SHORE APPRE-CIATE THAT, MA'AM!
BUT NOW, WE GOT A LITTLE SCORE TO SETTLE WITH GEORGE!
NO! YOU MUSTN'T! HE'S AS STRONG AS TEN MEN! LET HIM GO-- HE COULD KILL YOU AS SOON AS LOOK AT YOU!
3

HE-HE'S COMING BACK! BUT HE OUT-WEIGHS YOU BY FIFTY POUNDS-- AND HE TOOK YOUR GUNS! WHAT CHANCE WILL YOU HAVE???
MEBBE NONE, BUT I DON'T AIM TO LOSE BY DEFAULT!

SO YUH WHISTLED HIM BACK, DIDJA?? THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE, MISTER! AND IT WAS YORE LAST MISTAKE!
HE'S AS BIG AS YUH SAID, MISS... AND EVEN MEANER!

IN THE NEXT SPLIT-SECOND, THE KID TOOK THE DEADLY GIANT COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE... INSTEAD OF TRYING TO DUCK AWAY FROM THE MENACING GUN, KID COLT HURLED HIMSELF DIRECTLY AT THE FIGURE ON HORSEBACK, BEFORE GEORGE COULD EVEN SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER!

AS BOTH MEN HIT THE GROUND, THE MADDENED GEORGE TRIED TO GET HIS MONSTROUS ARMS AROUND THE KID, BUT IT WAS LIKE TRYING TO HOLD A GREASED PIG!
I DON'T MIND FIGHTIN' A BIG JASPER LIKE YOU! YUH MAKE A MIGHTY EASY TARGET!

I'LL KILL YUH FOR-- UGH!
IF I HAD A SILVER DOLLAR FOR EVERY TIME SOMEBODY SAID THAT TO ME, I'D BE THE RICHEST HOMBRE IN THESE PARTS!
4

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

A JOVIAL JAMBOREE OF JAUNTY JINGLES AND JESTING JABS JURY-RIGGED TO JETTISON YOUR JIM-JAMS!

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Since the Thanksgiving season is almost upon us, what could be more fitting than a sentimental little sonnet from me to you? (Actually, there are a zillion things that could be more fitting— but since it's my column—!)

"THANKS"
By Henry Wadsworth Lee

I'm thankful for our writers
Whose imaginations never fail,
And I'm thankful for our artists
Who illustrate each tale.
I'm thankful for our letterers
Who print the words we write,
And without our classy colorists
We'd just be black and white.
I'm thankful for our editors
Who put it all together,
And the gang that proofs each
peerless page
In every kind of weather.
I'm thankful for our printers
So dependable and true,
And also for our auditors
Whatever it is they do.
I'm thankful for our sales force
Selling every neighborhood,
And I thank our competition
For making us look good.
Now here's to all of Marveldom
I can't thank you enough,
Yep, you're the ones I thank the most
For reading all this stuff!

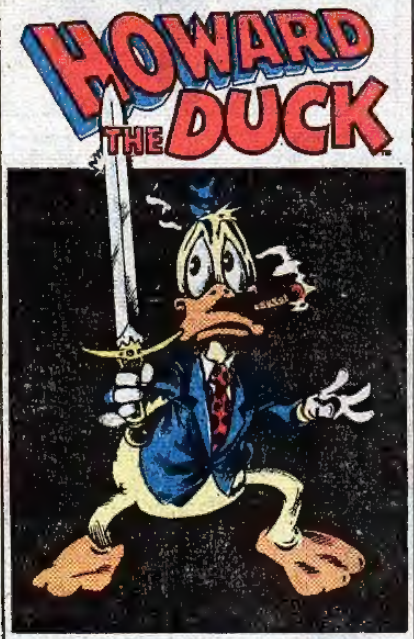
Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! We've got a crazy kaboodle of bombastic bombshells to lay on ya this time around, so let's get rolling right along, shall we?

ITEM! There's nothing better to brighten up a slow and sultry summer day than a friendly game of sock-it-to-'em softball— and it's so much the better if Mighty Marvel comes out as the wondrous winner! On a tumultuous Tuesday a week or so back Marvel-time (that's July in the real world) your Batty Bullpen broke its all-too-long losing streak by defeating, demolishing, and otherwise destroying the rollickin' representatives of ESQUIRE! We're not saying it was all that difficult, but without the humble help of a certain bashful blue-eyed Benjamin Grimm, we never would have done it!

ITEM! In a move daringly designed to direct your undivided attention to our pulsatin' PREMIERE and sensational SPOTLIGHT mags, we proudly present the two current features in each of these titanic titles! In MARVEL PREMIERE #28, the long-awaited, long-demanded "Legion of Monsters!" makes its devastating debut. Not to be confused with the our former black-and-white mag with the same name, this fearsome feature is a special once-in-a-lifetime-team-up of Man-Thing, Ghost Rider, Werewolf (By Night) and Morbius, The Living Vampire! And if that isn't enough to conjure with, MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #26 will be presenting an astounding adventure of that Aquarian Defender—the stupendous, savage Sub-Mariner! What's coming up after these frantic features—? Well, that would be telling. So stay tuned, keep alert, and keep reading! We'll spill the information somewhere. You know how modest we are!

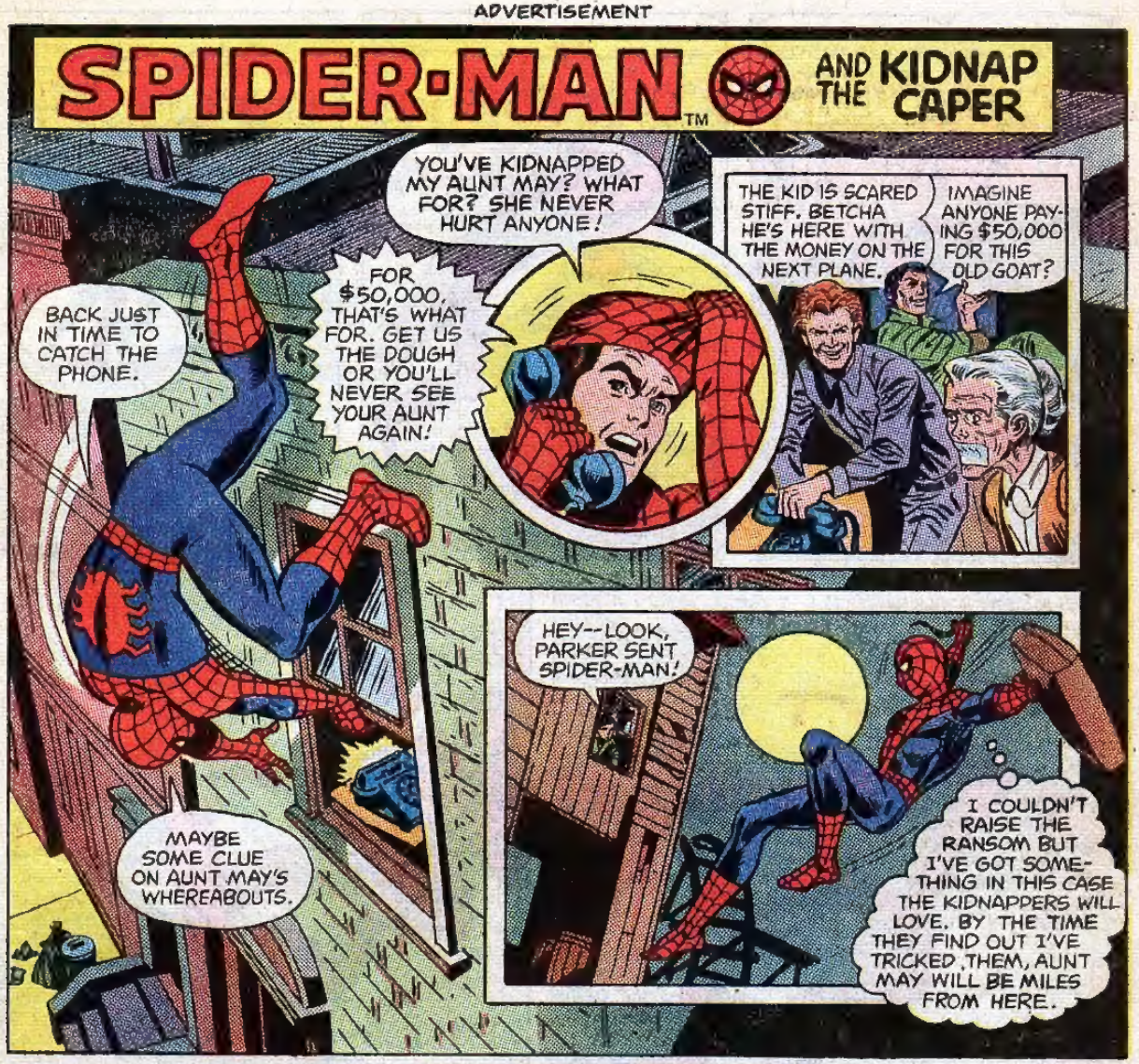


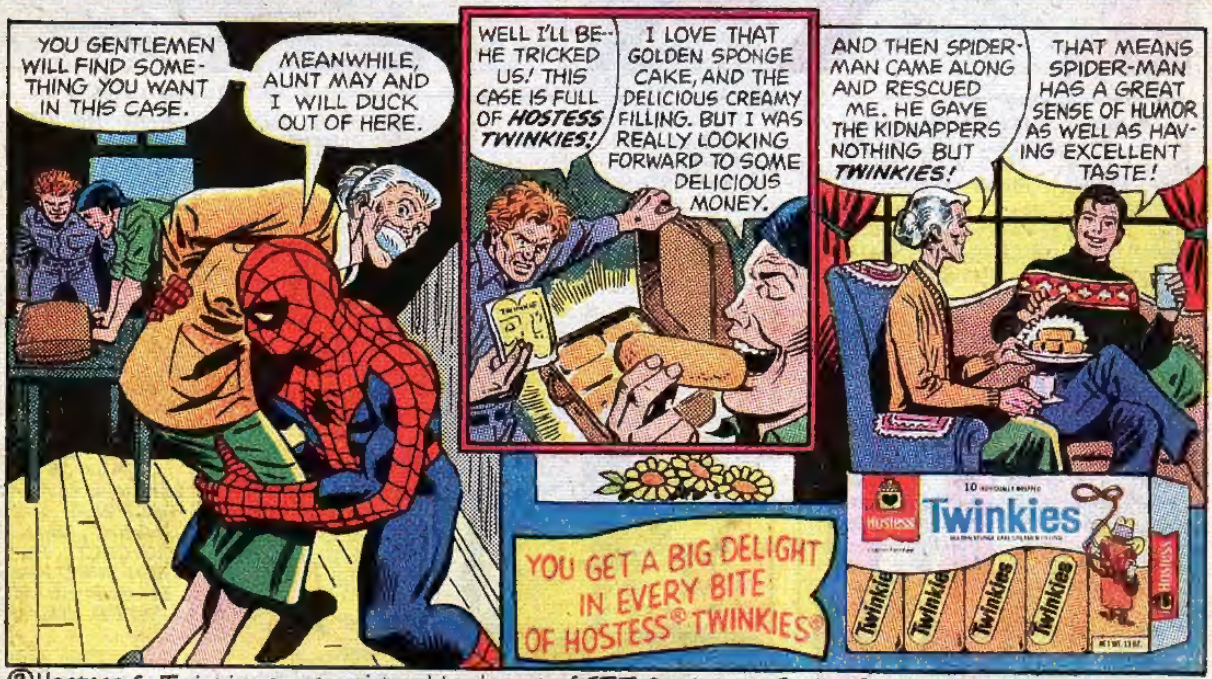
ITEM! And speaking of artistic triumphs, have you picked up the pulse-pounding premiere issue of HOWARD THE DUCK yet? If you've seen any of his solo sagas in the back of GIANT-SIZE MAN-THING, you won't want to miss it! Frank Brunner, Tom Palmer, and Steve Gerber have worked themselves to the proverbial bone to produce what must be the strangest team-up the Marvel Universe has ever seen. Don't miss the fantabulous first encounter of Howard and... Spider-Man? And while we're on the topic of frantic firsts, don't miss the two more of our latest and greatest efforts— BLACK GOLIATH and OMEGA THE UNKNOWN! You've never met OMEGA before, but all POWER MAN fans must certainly remember our twenty-foot tall titan who appeared in issue #'s 24 and 25 of Luke Cage's mag! After all, it was you who demanded that we give him his own title, True Believer. Your wish is our command! And don't forget— even though STRANGE TALES is now devoted to representing the best of the early Doctor Strange classics, WARLOCK's still soaring! In fact, he's moved into his own merely magnificent mag, while Jim Starlin, jester of all trades, continues working on a top secret project which he plans springing on the Bullpen towards the end of the year. We'll let you know the details as soon as **we** find out, but while you're waiting, be sure to pick up that titanic triumvirate premiere package— HOWARD THE DUCK, OMEGA THE UNKNOWN, and BLACK GOLIATH! They're sure to make comic book history!

ITEM! Who says comic book writers can only write comic books? Not ARCHIE GOODWIN nor STEVE ENGLEHART, whose novelette-length prose pieces will be appearing in Pyramid Books' two-volume paperback anthology, WEIRD HEROES!

ITEM! Have ya glommed the latest PAUL McCARTNEY AND WINGS album, "Venus and Mars," yet? If not, there's a cut ya just gotta hear! It's called "Magneto and the Titanium Man," and if that's not enough to start the Bullpen blushing bright red, we don't know **what** is!

ITEM! Seems that **everyone** agrees that Marvel's still the greatest, 'cause the winners have just been announced in the annual SHAZAM awards, and the blushin' Bullpen walked away with so many of 'em that we needed a truck to get back to the office. The winners in **all** categories are: DRAMATIC DIVISION. Best Writer: ARCHIE GOODWIN; Best Penciller: JOHN BUSCEMA; Best Inker: DICK GIORDANO; Best Letterer: JOHN COSTANZA; Best Colorist: TATJANA WOOD; Superior Achievement by an Individual: ROY THOMAS; Best Continuing Feature: CONAN; Best Individual Story: "Gotterdammerung"; Best Individual Short Story: "Cathedral Perilous"; Outstanding New Talent: CRAIG RUSSELL. HUMOR DIVISION. Best Writer: STEVE SKEATES; Best Penciller: MARIE SEVERIN; Best Inker: RALPH REESE; Best Story: "Kaspar the Dead Baby"; and, the Hall of Fame Award: JACK KIRBY. Congrats to all the winners.


SPIDER-MAN™ AND THE KIDNAP CAPER
YOU'VE KIDNAPPED MY AUNT MAY? WHAT FOR? SHE NEVER HURT ANYONE!
FOR $50,000, THAT'S WHAT FOR. GET US THE DOUGH OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE YOUR AUNT AGAIN!
BACK JUST IN TIME TO CATCH THE PHONE.
MAYBE SOME CLUE ON AUNT MAY'S WHEREABOUTS.
THE KID IS SCARED STIFF. BETCHA HE'S HERE WITH THE MONEY ON THE NEXT PLANE.
IMAGINE ANYONE PAYING $50,000 FOR THIS OLD GOAT?
HEY--LOOK, PARKER SENT SPIDER-MAN!
I COULDN'T RAISE THE RANSOM BUT I'VE GOT SOMETHING IN THIS CASE THE KIDNAPPERS WILL LOVE. BY THE TIME THEY FIND OUT I'VE TRICKED THEM, AUNT MAY WILL BE MILES FROM HERE.


YOU GENTLEMEN WILL FIND SOMETHING YOU WANT IN THIS CASE.
MEANWHILE, AUNT MAY AND I WILL DUCK OUT OF HERE.
WELL I'LL BE-- HE TRICKED US! THIS CASE IS FULL OF HOSTESS TWINKIES!
I LOVE THAT GOLDEN SPONGE CAKE, AND THE DELICIOUS CREAMY FILLING. BUT I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME DELICIOUS MONEY.
AND THEN SPIDER-MAN CAME ALONG AND RESCUED ME. HE GAVE THE KIDNAPPERS NOTHING BUT TWINKIES!
THAT MEANS SPIDER-MAN HAS A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR AS WELL AS HAVING EXCELLENT TASTE!
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® TWINKIES®
Twinkies

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IF'N I CAN JUST GIT MY HANDS ON YUH--
I'D LIKE TO OBLIGE, MISTER, BUT I GOT OTHER PLANS!
HAH! NOW I GOT YUH!
OOF!
I'LL SNAP YUH IN TWO, JUST LIKE--UGH!!
NOT WHILE I CAN STILL FIGHT, YUH WON'T!
WHAP!
HELP! I'M FALLING! HELP!
I GOT YUH--
HELP!
YORE TOO HEAVY! THE SHIRT-- IT'S TEARIN'...
RRRRIP!
OH NO-- NO!
THERE THERE, MA'AM! MEBBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY! YORE FREE OF HIM, AT LAST!
IT'S IRONIC, ISN'T IT? THE ONE THING HE WAS SO PROUD OF--HIS SIZE, AND HIS STRENGTH, WERE WHAT KILLED HIM! IF HE HAD BEEN SMALLER AND LIGHTER, YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD HIM!
SOMETIMES FATE TAKES A HAND IN THESE THINGS, MA'AM! I GOT A HUNCH LIFE IS GONNA LOOK A HEAP BRIGHTER TO YOU FROM NOW ON!
AND THE KID WAS RIGHT! HE TOOK THE LONELY GIRL TO THE NEARBY TOWN OF LAS PALMAS, WHERE SHE GOT A JOB TEACHING SCHOOL! THAT WAS THE LAST SHE EVER SAW OF HER HANDSOME BENEFACTOR... EXCEPT, EVERY SO OFTEN SHE'D HEAR PEOPLE TALK OF A STRANGE OUTLAW, HALF MAN, HALF LEGEND, NAMED KID COLT... AND THEN SHE'D KNOW! IN HER HEART, SHE'D KNOW!
The END